

## South Lenches Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7pm Little Orchard, Atch Lench

**Present:** Cllr. Mrs. Hodges, Cllr. Mrs. Tyrrell. Caroline Evans, Peter Warren, Chrissy Brown, Luke Hughes, Becky Hopkinson from plan-ET (online) and Kerry Williamson (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Cllr. Dr. Murray & David Proops.

1. Mrs Hodges welcomed Luke and Ann Hughes to the Steering group, recruited during the community event. Mrs Hodges thanked the Steering group members for their support with the community event. Thanks were reciprocated to Mrs Hodges.
2. Becky summarised the results from the consultation. Results were positive.

**Action: Becky to send results to Steering group.**

3. Steering group discussed the participants and results:
  - a. Good response to community engagement when compared to 2017/18.
  - b. Anecdotal comments from engagement – ‘additional housing needed in some way, shape or form’.
  - c. Houses for families, bungalows.
  - d. 50% of responses to community engagement was from the 60+ age group. Discussion about engaging younger demographic – use social media, organise an event e.g. pizza party, sporting event during school/university holidays.
  - e. School numbers falling, specialising in SENCO to attract families.
  - f. Post office and shop gone – no amenities.
  - g. Socioeconomic factors – no facilities to help people e.g. transport.
  - h. 60mph roads – not safe for walkers and families.
4. Valued Landscapes (VL).
  - a. Mrs. Hodges highlighted Broadway’s Neighbourhood Plan (2022) for definitions.
  - b. Becky – do not miss out a view because you think it is covered elsewhere – have crossovers.
  - c. Orchards on Wychavon Way – views are valued landscapes, protect orchards.
  - d. Blossom trail – Heart of England planted indigenous trees.
  - e. Steering group considered the Church Lench VL map (attached) and decided:
    - i. Take out 1 and 2 (not valued).
    - ii. Keep 8 (mirrored in Atch Lench).
    - iii. Remove 3 (orchard see from Atch Lench).
    - iv. 4 - public footpath (see arrow on map).
    - v. 5 - view from club to Malverns.
    - vi. 6 - change to look back to Church Lench.
    - vii. 7 - see lakes in winter, covered by trees in summer. Seasonal VL.

**Action: Cllr. Dr. Murray will annotate OS maps for Becky.**

**Action: Review and agree Pete’s proposed footpath in Church Lench.**

**Action: Agree VL's in Sheriff Lench with Chrissy.**

5. Green Spaces (GS).
  - a. Steering group considered the Church Lench GS map (attached):
    - i. Remove 2.
    - ii. 3 – Victorian school
    - iii. 4 – village pool area. Was a small village Green with pool. Has historic value and is used by community.
    - iv. 5 – cricket ground.
    - v. 6 – Yates community orchard.
    - vi. 7 - Church and area around.
    - vii. 1 – Low Road orchard, outside development boundary.
  - b. Atch Lench community orchard – sold to Vale Heritage Landscape Trust in 2024.
  - c. Chris Seabourne's book – history, social history including church and school.
  - d. Question to Becky: 'Why protect green spaces?'. Answer: Do not need too much history (use photos). Becky showed an example. Consider:
    - i. Reasonably close proximity to community.
    - ii. Special – balance what is special versus wanting to protect.
    - iii. Local in character.
    - iv. Size – 10 to 15 acres is OK, not larger.
    - v. Tell landowners that you are putting their land forward as a GS.

**Action: Becky to send example shown.**

- e. The steering group discussed GS in other parts of the Lenches:
  - i. Heart of England forest can be included as it is on the Blossom trail.
  - ii. Atch Lench – heritage orchard.
  - iii. Sheriff's Lench -Orchards, Heart of England, observatory
  - iv. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT) on village boundary – deer sanctuary, clearing for picnics, footpaths.

**Action: Chrissy to ask Carol Yates for background information on the community orchard.**

**Action: Cllr. Mrs. Tyrrell. Description of GS – get background information and put in a format to send to Becky.**

**Action: Make contact with WWT for a map to see how much is within the boundary.**

6. New Homes Site Selection.
  - a. Extend Parish boundary, keep linear development:
    - i. Low Road and Evesham Road – extend to end of 30mph.
    - ii. SWDP proposing options to extend boundary (covers development that has been approved).

**Action: Cllr. Mrs. Hodges & Pete Warren to speak to Francis Fleming at Planning Department about an additional development boundary extension.**

- b. Becky discussed 'Call for Sites' process:
  - i. Contact all landowners to find potential sites – no guarantees.

- ii. Assess against objectives.
  - iii. Reduce to a few sites.
  - iv. Ask community to rank them.
  - v. Putting sites in Neighbourhood Plan can mean that the community gets the development it wants rather than have it imposed.
  - vi. Examiner will ask how site selection has been done – cannot simply pick and choose.
- c. Other option for site selection is no site selection – rural exception site.

Becky left the meeting.

7. Steering group rounded up:
- a. Church Lench infrastructure cannot cope with more housing.
  - b. Neighbourhood Plan once adopted same law as Planning – South Lenches does not have one currently.
8. It was proposed and agreed unanimously to not follow site selection process and have a rural exception site. Becky will be asked to write policies in this direction.
9. Next steps:
- a. Finish work on Valued Landscapes and Green Spaces.
  - b. Apply for a grant when they become available to engage Becky.
  - c. Next meeting in early July.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm